

Physician Impairment

Disease states suffered by some physicians may interfere with their ability to function as a professional person in the practice of the Healing Arts. The Board sought a program to encourage physicians and other health care professionals under BME jurisdiction suffering from disabilities to seek help and disclose their status to an entity which would allow for confidential oversight. It selected the Professional Assistance Program of New Jersey (PAP) 742 Alexander Road, Princeton, NJ (609) 919-1660. The Board, with the assistance of the PAP, addresses issues of professional accountability with physicians, balancing their concern for sick doctors with concern for public safety through the Alternative Resolution Program (ARP). The Physician Impairment Review Committee (IRC) maintains a confidential, limited access file of physicians accepted in the ARP (reports are coded without a physician name identifier). The goal is to handle compliant participants in a confidential manner, allowing for a non-disciplinary, rehabilitative pathway. This program addresses the reporting requirements of the Professional Medical Conduct Reform Act (1990). If enrolled and compliant with the (PAP) you can truthfully attest that you have no unreported condition that could impair your practice of medicine. Confidential enrollment in the PAP constitutes adequate reporting at the time of license renewal.

The objectives of the ARP are:

- Obtain timely assessment of impairment
- Protect the Public (get help for a health care professional before he/she impacts patient care)
- Remove the fear of disclosure for health care professionals and their colleagues and increase reporting
- Encourage early treatment and recovery
- Offer high degree of confidentiality
- Assure adequate monitoring and after care
- Get health care professional back in practice

Diseases of Impairment may include drug abuse, alcohol abuse, psychiatric disorders, physical disabilities, cognitive impairment, emotional/situational stress, senility, personality disorders, and disruptive physicians.

Physicians who believe they may need assistance with any disease of impairment are encouraged to contact the PAP at (609) 919-1660 and speak with Dr. Baxter, the Medical Director.